

TEXAS PANHANDLE WORKPLACE Mental Health TOOLKIT

a 2022 collaborative project of:





“

ONLY WHEN WE ARE BRAVE ENOUGH TO EXPLORE
THE DARKNESS WILL WE DISCOVER THE INFINITE
POWER OF OUR LIGHT.

”

Brené Brown
Daring Greatly

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MENTAL HEALTH IS HEALTH

HOW IT STARTED

The post-pandemic workforce is facing mental health challenges at new highs.

In 2021, the face of the workforce changed drastically and employee retention suddenly became a very real struggle for most employers.

69 million Americans left their jobs, 70% of those left voluntarily.

HOW IT'S GOING

There's good news! Employers are becoming more aware of employee mental health needs.

In a 2022 survey, 70% of workers said they believe their employer is more concerned about employees' mental health than ever before. 81% of those survey respondents plan to look for a workplace that supports mental health when they seek future job opportunities.

HOW TO CREATE A CULTURE OF WELL-BEING THAT WILL SUPPORT AND RETAIN WORKERS

That's what you'll learn through this toolkit assembled by Panhandle PBS (PPBS), Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance (PBHA), and America's Small Business Development Center at West Texas A&M University (SBDC).

Inside, you'll discover information about Mental Health America's (MHA) Workplace Mental Health Toolkit, a free, annual publication. MHA is a non-profit dedicated to addressing the needs of people living with mental illness and promoting overall mental health.

To supplement the toolkit, PPBS offers advice from Texas Panhandle and national mental health experts collected in its documentary, "The Little Things." The eight-episode series provides seemingly small habits to cultivate that can make a big difference in a person's ability to cope with stress, depression, anxiety, and other conditions.

Plus, PBHA and SBDC provide tips from Texas Panhandle business leaders and owners as well as links to resources in our community and beyond.



ABOUT THE PARTNERS

Panhandle PBS



Panhandle PBS serves the entire Texas Panhandle with high quality local and national PBS programming and community engagement that celebrates our region while addressing timely issues.

The station signed on the air as KACV-TV in August 1988, with a mission of educating, enlightening, entertaining and empowering the people of Amarillo and the surrounding area. It operates from the Gilvin Broadcast Center on the Washington Street Campus of Amarillo College.

Among Panhandle PBS's recent productions is "The Little Things," a local series addressing well-being in an age of rising mental health and addiction challenges and a pandemic that has made those challenges worse. The episodes, for television and YouTube, focus on stress, depression, anxiety, emotional regulation, isolation, and trauma, coupled with information about the healing powers of mindfulness, exercise, diet, creativity, connection, and nature.

Panhandle PBS hopes that this toolkit of collaborative resources, including segments and full episodes of "The Little Things" at PanhandlePBS.org/TheLittleThings, will be of service to workplaces and individuals.

Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance



Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance envisions a Texas Panhandle which promotes behavioral health and wellness where all people have access to high quality behavioral health care when and where they need it.

PBHA is a multi-sector community collaborative that operates under the fiscal sponsorship and support of United Way of Amarillo & Canyon. PBHA focuses its efforts to coordinate planning, implement activities and develop resources that address the mental well-being of the Texas Panhandle (27 counties). It guides collaborative efforts and design solutions to benefit our region.

As adults, we spend nearly half of our awake hours at work or doing work. Improving and sustaining an organizational culture that supports healthy workplaces (both physical and mental health) will help us improve productivity issues due to poor mental health and stress/burnout. It also helps organizations recruit and retain their workforce. A healthy workforce leads to improved financial status for families and improved health and quality of life for our communities.

As part of its efforts to build healthier communities and workplaces, PBHA partnered with America's SBDC at WTAMU on a collaborative project of a year-long learning community that supports and grows healthy workplaces.

For additional resources that support mental health and mental health practitioners, contact Shree Veeramachaneni at shree@panhandlebehavioralhealthalliance.org.

America's SBDC at WTAMU



America's SBDC at WTAMU has provided consulting, training, and research services to small business owners in the Texas Panhandle since 1987. A department of the Paul & Virginia Engler College of Business at West Texas A&M University, the consulting staff work one-on-one with entrepreneurs to help start and expand businesses that create new jobs. Funding is provided through the U.S. Small Business Administration and State of Texas.

The center became especially involved in workplace mental health support after the pandemic of 2020. They saw entrepreneurs experience post-traumatic growth and not just survive, but grow and excel. In 2022, the SBDC partnered with PBHA to develop the Workforce Mental Health & Culture Learning Community, based off of Brené Brown's *Dare to Lead*. The cohort of area business leaders explored mental health challenges in their organizations and launched projects to provide additional employee support.

The SBDC can be found online at wtsbdc.com. For additional resources that support mental health and culture in small business, please contact Gina Woodward at gina@wtsbdc.com.



WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT

This is a starting point for you regardless of if you are an employer, manager, or employee. We hope that you can be a more effective mental health champion using some of the resources below.

On the following pages, you will find resources from Panhandle PBS, Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance, America's SBDC at WTAMU, and Mental Health America.

Mental Health America is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and promoting the overall mental health of all.

CHECK OUT ALL OF THEIR RESOURCES AT [MHANATIONAL.ORG](https://mhanational.org).

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), **five of the 10 leading causes of disability worldwide are mental health related.**

Employers see a **\$4 return for every \$1 invested in employee mental health support and treatment** (Health Action Alliance).

62% of missed work days are attributed to burnout, depression, or anxiety.

50% of full-time U.S. workers have left a previous job due, at least in part, to mental health reasons.

FOR IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY AND RETENTION, INVESTING IN WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH JUST MAKES SENSE.



MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA EMPLOYEE CONVERSATIONS

Trying to help an employee who may have a mental health concern can be a difficult conversation. These 11 tips from Mental Health America can help make the conversation productive for both the employer and employee.

11 TIPS FOR TALKING TO AN EMPLOYEE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN

Has an employee ever approached you with a mental health concern? Here are 11 tips to start the conversation.



1. Feel more prepared by educating yourself about mental health concerns at mhanational.org/MentalHealthInfo.
2. Ensure you are in a mentally healthy headspace before offering support to others.
3. Ask the employee with a mental health concern appropriate, open-ended questions, such as:
 - “How are you feeling today?”
 - “Why do you think you feel this way?”
 - “How do you feel this might be affecting your work?”
 - “How can I help?”
4. Actively listen with your complete attention on the speaker.
5. Resist thinking about how you should respond next or offer advice or solutions.
6. Validate their experiences and express your understanding back to them.
7. If comfortable and appropriate, relate to them on a personal level and share your own experiences.
8. Refer them to your organization’s resources or online mental health screening at screening.mhanational.org.
9. Always respect the employee’s need for and right to privacy if they disclose a mental health condition, and be aware of your personal biases against mental health conditions.
10. Know your comfort level when supporting other people. You are not expected to be a mental health professional, but you can still help others by opening the conversation and referring them to the appropriate resources.
11. Educate yourself on the process for asking HR to help with providing accommodations or navigating benefits.

**DOWNLOAD THE FULL WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT AT
MHANATIONAL.ORG.**

WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS FOR SMALL EMPLOYERS

Tips on improving employee mental health may seem impractical for small employers or business owners – health insurance is prohibitively expensive, an HR team or individuals may be non-existent, and flexible work arrangements are only feasible for certain job functions. Fortunately, there are ways for small employers to improve mental health, even with limited resources. MHA's Work Health Survey findings show that certain non-financial perks are more important than financial compensation, can foster positive workplace perceptions, and increase employee engagement.¹

Consider Low-cost Solutions

- **Train your managers to support people.** Eight in 10 employees consider quitting their jobs because of a poor manager. Oftentimes, people are promoted to management because of their success in other roles, but without proper training, successful employees can make poor people managers. Invest in cost-effective online training programs, provide managers with allocated work time to attend training or other professional development course, and meet 1:1 with your managers to understand their strengths and areas that may need improvement.
- **Get to know your employees.** Small employers are at an advantage when getting to know each employee. Use active listening skills to learn what matters to them. Remember and note birthdays, important moments, or family hardships to show employees that you listen and care. Even if you cannot provide full holidays, consider giving early release or flexible scheduling to employees when it matters.
- **Be creative with your benefits.** Consider swapping benefits with other small employers or business. Can you negotiate discounted pricing for healthy lunch meals or a gym or yoga studio membership? Can you provide catering to employees who work over holidays? Can you rotate schedules so employees who work on a holiday have first priority for the following holidays?

Research Group Solutions

- **Expand your depth chart.** If an employee left your organization or retired on positive terms, they might be available to pick up shifts or cover on an as-needed basis. Similarly, you might know someone who works in a similar work environment who has all the skills but might need a day or two to get trained on specific software or equipment. Having people who can fill in as needed can allow your regular employees to take time off.
- **Team up with other employers.** Consider teaming up with other local employers to create a business group or join a professional employer organization. These structures allow your organization to pool resources for finance and human resources support and achieve affordable health care or other benefits.

Challenge Long-held Assumptions

- **All organizations can achieve better wellness.** After the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations discovered many creative ways to support employee mental health. Benefits and support that seemed impossible to provide before became more accessible, such as affordable telehealth options or employer-sponsored wellness apps.
- **Providing sick time is a public health imperative.** After the pandemic, workplaces are more willing to recognize the importance of sick time. Small businesses often use social media to communicate any daily schedule changes because of staffing disruptions.

1. Hellebuycck, Michelle, et al. "Mind the Workplace 2018 Report." Mental Health America, <https://www.mhanational.org/sites/default/files/Mind%20the%20Workplace%20-%20MHA%20Workplace%20Health%20Survey%202017%20FINAL.pdf>.

PBHA WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

In addition to the full toolkit that you can download from Mental Health America, Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance has compiled additional resources that includes Texas Panhandle, regional, and national organizations.

**ACCESS A DIGITAL COPY OF THIS TOOLKIT AT
[PANHANDLEPBS.ORG/THELITTLETHINGS](https://panhandlepbs.org/thelittlethings)**

EDUCATION FOR SUPERVISORS

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS - TEXAS PANHANDLE CHAPTER

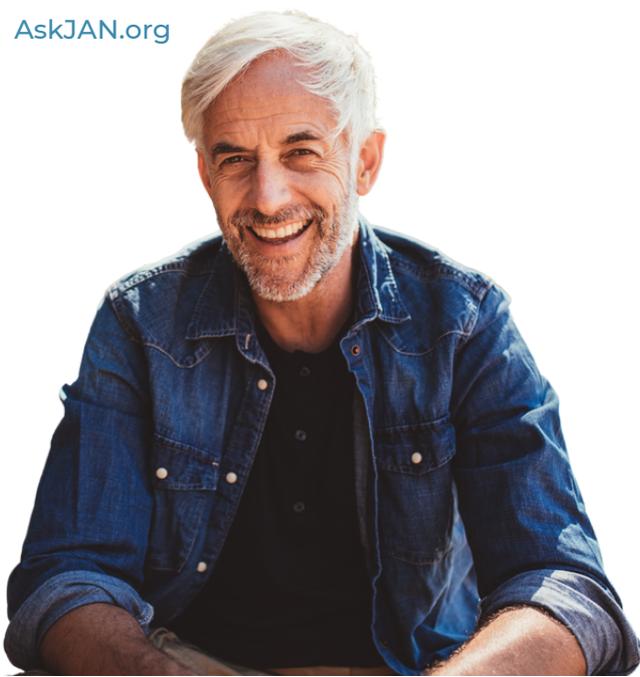
The [Texas Panhandle Friends and Family Seminar](#) as well as other online and in person events throughout the year are geared to improve the quality of life of all individuals living with mental illness and their families.

[NAMITexas.org](https://namitexas.org)

JOB ACCOMODATION NETWORK

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is the leading source of **free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues.**

[AskJAN.org](https://askjan.org)



LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES & SERVICES

PANHANDLE MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE

Comprehensive guide for regional, state, and federal mental health resources. A widget is available for website placement.

Embed the Panhandle Mental Health Guide Service Directory widget on your website to guide employees and visitors to available resources

PanhandleMentalHealthGuide.org

SUPPORT

MIND SHARE PARTNERS

An **infographic** summary of The 2021 State of Mental Health report.

MindSharePartners.org

VERYWELL MIND

Learn more about the **value of a psychologically healthy workplace.**

VerywellMind.com

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

A **video-led information tool** walks participants through a group discussion to determine ways to improve the mental health of their shared workplace.

NAMI.org

PBHA WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES, CONTINUED

GENERAL RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS & EMPLOYEES

CENTER FOR WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

Comprehensive mental health tools for employers from industry specific resources, infographics, podcasts, and remote work resources.

WorkplaceMentalHealth.org

MIND SHARE PARTNERS

Customized consulting from culture change, manager training, executive strategy development, and other mental health training.

MindsharePartners.org

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

Resources for employers and employees including webinars, tips, and calculators.

NSC.org/MentalHealth

SOUTHWEST ADA CENTER

A legal resource on the Americans with Disabilities Act and related disability rights laws, providing technical assistance, training and materials dissemination.

SouthwestADA.org

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

A work and mental health guide for employees.

NAMI.org

REGIONAL SUPPORT

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance to keep up with regional resources and events including training, tips, and partner events.

Facebook.com/TXPBHA

CONFERENCE

Access recordings of the regional Peace of Mind Conference to hear expert speakers and discussion of multiple workplace mental health topics.

YouTube.com/@pbha

ASSESSMENTS & COST CALCULATORS

MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA

This short organizational assessment helps measure the current impact of workplace mental health support.

WorkplaceMentalHealth.org

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

Calculate the cost of employee mental health and illness for employers.

NSC.org/MentalHealthAtWork

CENTER FOR WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

The Depression Calculator for Employers uses a wealth of the latest research to model how depression impacts a company or organization, based on just a few key demographics.

WorkplaceMentalHealth.org



BEST PRACTICES

In 2022, Panhandle PBS, PBHA, and the SBDC surveyed Texas Panhandle business owners and leaders about their own best practices for mental health and supporting a positive culture in the workplace. Most of these best practices require little or no funds and can be used in your own workplace to support employees and your own mental health. Here is a sample of their answers.

MONDAY MINUTE

Every Monday at 9am, we gather in my office. This is a time that we can share what we are looking forward to, something we are grateful for, a quote, something positive from the weekend, or something we need support with for the week.

What is not allowed is complaining or negativity. The purpose is to set the tone for our week in a positive light. As a supervisor, it also gives me a glimpse of how everyone is doing.

We also meet at noon each Wednesday and walk together as a team. This is a reminder to all to prioritize moving your body and is an excellent time to connect with coworkers.

~ *Lara Escobar*
Amarillo Area Foundation

PURPOSEFUL MEETINGS

We have increased “holiday” days for all staff in order to encourage rest, self-care and time with family.

We are incorporating mental wellness/resilience strategies in all of our staff meetings such as a short mini-training or team-building exercise.

~ *Lesley Webb*
Opportunity School

WORK FROM HOME

Our office provides work from home opportunities.

~ *Jason Howell*
Potter & Armstrong
County Public Defender

PREP TIME

Two days per year are set aside for preparation and planning. We also close on school holidays.

~ *Regan Hall*
Turn Center

PERSONAL COACHING

As a certified life coach, I bring coaching into my workplace. I, and my manager, discuss with team members the power of being present, how to give and receive feedback with compassion, kindness, and respect.

We discuss ownership, accountability, agreements, and responsibility; and how each apply in the workplace, in personal life, and with oneself.

We coach regarding the ability to take care of oneself through self-reflection when emotions rise due to a button getting pushed, but stopping the reaction before the trigger is pulled, and what are the options during those moments of emotions and struggle.

We desire for our team members to have tools that they can establish now, if they choose to, and build on for the remainder of their lives.

~ *Jim Jones*
Orange Leaf Yogurt

DEEP CONVERSATIONS

We focus on deeper conversations with our team that dive into knowing them at a more authentic level with who they are, what's most important to them, what they want to see happen in their lives and business careers in the next three years and empowering them to succeed at the highest levels based on their strengths and weaknesses.

We use three assessments to help us really understand them and give them conversational models to be able to openly and confidently talk through these things with strong psychological safety.

This approach has built a strong culture of trust and transparency that brought our team together and raised performance.

~ *Dirk van Reenen*
BERGflow

ENCOURAGE TIME OFF

Time off that is encouraged and required to use. We have a paid time off policy of vacation that is "use it or lose it." This is helpful for those of us who think they can never take off and keep putting it off for another time.

~ *Belinda Creliia-Palacios*
Amarillo Children's Home

BALANCE

Encouraging a healthy work/home life balance allows the flexibility for me to be home with my kids when I need to be.

~ *Courtney Austin*
Cenikor Foundation

PART-TIME BENEFITS

We give paid holidays and 401K benefits to our part-time employees. We have also included COVID pay for any employee who is out for COVID.

~ *Kim Braswell*
Downtown Women's Center

LIVING WAGE

I pay my employees a good living wage. This has been the single best thing I could've done for my practice. I also make sure they have plenty of paid leave days.

~ *Brian Tregellas*
North Texas Healing Center

COUNSELING

Counseling services offered by my employer.

~ *Anonymous*

QUIET WEEK

We have a "de-stresser" or "quiet" week where sending emails and holding meetings is highly discouraged.

During this time, employees can catch up on work that they haven't been able to get to or can utilize PTO without fearing that they will have an overwhelming amount of emails/work piled up when they return.

~ *Miquela Smith*
Texas A&M AgriLife

FLEXIBILITY

Workplace flexibility and remote work options allow us to work effectively while balancing personal needs.

~ *Sridevi Veeramachaneni*
Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance



CELEBRATE

Genuine care and empathy for every part of their lives. Celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, and stepping up to help when they need it most, personally and professionally.

~ Jennifer Potter
Family Support Services

MOVIE BREAK

I used to do light stand-up when we're all working together. The staff say it's like working in a comedy club.

Also, when we meet or beat our time-production goals, we go to the movies together in the middle of the day!

~ DJ Stubben
Welcome Partner

POSITIVE REMINDERS

We have established constructive core values and constantly remind our staff that their actions should reflect them in their daily work habits. In fact one of our core values is "positive."

We also strive to avoid micromanaging our staff and empower them to make informed and educated decisions on our behalf. Whether the outcome is wrong or right, they at least have the power to resolve.

We also encourage a healthy work/life balance. We go out of our way to "spoil" our employees with random games/contests and award hand tools and gift cards to the winners. We pull everyone out of the field one afternoon every month for a BBQ lunch for the entire company.

Lastly, as everyone leaves the office to tackle their daily assignments, we reaffirm the positive and empowerment culture by enthusiastically exclaiming "Make us Proud!" as the staff leave the building.

~ Mike Moreland
Vitel Communications

FRIDAY BREAKFAST

Each Friday, employees from our departments gather for breakfast. I personally cook or purchase the breakfast as my way of thanking everyone for all that they do.

It has also provided a time for us to meet on a more personal level and has led to meaningful conversations and strengthened relationships.

~ Gina Woodward
America's SBDC at WTAMU

COMMUNICATION

As communications professionals, we are keenly aware of the ways that written communications in the workplace can add to stress and anxiety for the recipient. We try to address this problem by reviewing emails to be sure we soften requests with an expression of empathy or a compliment, a friendly emoji, a touch of humor or maybe a well-placed exclamation point.

We also try to convey gratitude. There is always something to be thankful for, and expressing gratitude lightens the load.

~ Mary Coyne
MCMC



LITTLE THINGS, BIG IMPACT

WHAT IF YOU HAD FREE, TRUSTWORTHY VIDEOS YOU COULD USE TO OPEN UP CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE WITHOUT HAVING TO BUY THEM YOURSELF?

YOU DO.

Panhandle PBS asked local and national mental health experts for their advice and the science behind it. The resulting series, “The Little Things” teaches simple practices that can help people build resilience. The show was produced in partnership with Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance and Texas Panhandle Centers for Behavioral and Development Health, and supported by other health and business entities and community nonprofits.

All content of the eight-episode series is available on the Panhandle PBS website and YouTube channel. It is posted both by episode and by individual segments of 1 to 4 minutes — short enough for a staff meeting or email. The segments make the content even more approachable.

Breathing intentionally. Being mindful. Exercise, connection, creativity — those aren’t just buzzwords. They’re science-based strategies to help us build resilience.

“The Little Things” delivers those strategies through relatable examples. Let’s say you’re driving and hit a red light. Do you go off in a flurry of stress and anxiety, or use the time to take deep, calming breaths? Choose the second answer as a routine practice, and you’ll be doing a little thing that can make a big impact on your mental health.

“The breath is one of those anchors that — we may not be able to control anything else going on around us, but we can change how we breathe,” trauma-informed yoga instructor Rynn Burkett says in the series.

“The Little Things” is packed with advice for rewiring the brain with easy new habits. Segments explain what happens in our brains and bodies when we experience anxiety, depression and other mental health challenges — and what happens when we practice a resilience strategy.

The Little Things



EPISODES

The Little Things

FIND “THE LITTLE THINGS” EPISODES AND A PLAYLIST OF SEGMENTS AT [PANHANDLEPBS.ORG/THELITTLETHINGS](https://panhandlepbs.org/thelittlethings) AND [YOUTUBE.COM/@PANHANDLEPBS](https://youtube.com/@panhandlepbs)

01 WHY & WHY NOW?

The weight of the world can be crushing these days. But the brain can be rewired with the little things — simple things you can do to improve your mental health.

Segments include:

- Neuroplasticity, how you can physically rewire your brain
- The state of mental health today
- How to help someone in crisis
- Social-emotional learning (for children) to build resilience

03 DEPRESSION & EXERCISE

Movement — of most any kind — can help to reduce symptoms of depression. The brain, body and relief techniques you need to know from local experts and those who have lived with the disorder.

Strategies include:

- Exercise
- Talking to someone
- Cultivating a practice

02 STRESS & MINDFULNESS

Stress can help or harm you. Amarillo experts discuss what stress does to you mentally and physically. And, we hear from them and others about how to identify stress and tame it.

Strategies include:

- Breathing techniques
- Mindfulness
- Meditation

04 ANXIETY & GUT

Shaping up your grocery list can shape up your brain. What you need to know about how your diet affects your brain.

Strategies include:

- Shelving your worries
- Rethinking your grocery list
- Making tumeric tea

THERE IS NO HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH.

- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

EPISODES CONTINUED

The Little Things

05 EMOTIONS & CREATIVITY

Creativity can help when your emotions are all over the place. Here are simple things to try from Amarilloans who understand the physical and mental toll of emotional dysregulation.

Strategies include:

- The Thought Model
- Candy Land (strategy for children)
- Creative activities: journaling, art
- A state of flow
- More breathing techniques

07 ISOLATION & CONNECTION

Isolating yourself can become a detrimental cycle. But there are simple things you can do to reconnect.

Strategies include:

- Volunteering
- Talking with someone you trust
- Knowing you are important

06 TRAUMA & NATURE

Modern humans are disconnected from nature, and that can upset our brains and bodies. Spending time outside can help reset your brain from mental challenges, including trauma.

Strategies include:

- Grounding techniques
- Ways to experience the outdoors for mental health

08 GETTING BETTER

Texas Panhandle organizations respond to fill gaps in mental healthcare for our community.

Strategies include:

- Integrated health
- Little things for a work setting
- Sounding boards

**WATCH ALL OF THESE EPISODES AND
FIND MORE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT
MENTAL HEALTH AT
[PANHANDLEPBS.ORG/THELITTLETHINGS](https://panhandlepbs.org/thelittlethings)
AND [YOUTUBE.COM/@PANHANDLEPBS](https://youtube.com/@panhandlepbs)**



QUICK TIPS FROM PANHANDLE PBS

The Little Things

Adopting regular practices, such as a meditation or listing things for which you're grateful can rewire your brain, creating strong, resilient neural pathways that are reinforced with repetition.

Want to know more? You have FREE access to "The Little Things" episodes that are full of easy ways you can improve your mental health - PanhandlePBS.org/TheLittleThings

MINDFULNESS

Stressed? **Try box breathing.** Inhale for a count of four, hold your breath for four, exhale for four, and hold that for four. Repeat until you are more calm physically and emotionally.

EXERCISE

According to the National Institutes of Health, **30 minutes of exercise** of moderate intensity, such as brisk walking, for three days a week, is sufficient to **gain mental health benefits.**

FOOD & MOOD

The gut is often called the second brain. The messages it sends to your mind will be healthier if you eat healthier. **Stock your pantry with fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, nuts and other brain foods.**

CREATIVITY

Having trouble regulating your emotions? **Creative activities can unlock inner resources** for dealing with stress, solving problems and enjoying life. There are so many options! Drawing, knitting, cooking, music, journaling...

NATURE

Studies show **spending time in green space** or bringing nature into your everyday life can contribute to relaxation, improve mood and reduce stress.

CONNECTION

Research indicates people who feel more **connected to others** have lower levels of anxiety and depression. Reach out to a friend, join a club, take a class, or volunteer.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

TEXAS PANHANDLE ORGANIZATIONS ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO FILL GAPS IN MENTAL HEALTHCARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

The final episode of the Panhandle PBS documentary series, "The Little Things," focuses on those efforts to raise awareness, and expand knowledge of and access to critical aid. And, many of the partners in the series are leading the way.

The Amarillo Area Foundation and Texas Panhandle Centers for Behavioral and Developmental Health, and Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance are making strong pushes into integrated care for the area. Integrated care means paying attention to both physical and mental health in the physician's office setting, with close collaboration between providers in both arenas.

The American Psychological Association estimates that as many as 70% of primary care visits are driven by mental health concerns. Making mental health part of the regular screening process reduces stigma associated with mental health, which can often keep people from seeking help.

AMARILLO AREA FOUNDATION

Amarillo Area Foundation has invested in a partnership with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute to bring integrated care systems to physicians with Coalition of Health Services in Hereford, BSA Health System in Amarillo, and Canyon's Family Medicine Centers so that each can include mental health checks during patient visits. The program provides for universal screening for mental health conditions and substance use disorders, and will help doctors care for patients and make referrals.

TEXAS PANHANDLE CENTERS

Texas Panhandle Centers has made strides into integrated healthcare with a wellness program that reaches across the area. Patients get both physical and mental health screenings, and are treated and referred for care. TPC wellness providers travel to patients' homes and also use a new mobile trailer — an equipped medical office on wheels — to serve rural communities.

PANHANDLE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ALLIANCE

Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance strives to improve mental health and access to care issues in our frontier (outside of Amarillo) communities in the Texas Panhandle. They are currently working with communities in Hutchinson County and Deaf Smith County on how to improve mental health by providing technical assistance, resources, and other support. For more information or to learn how your community can work with PBHA, please contact shree@PanhandleBehavioralHealthAlliance.org.

Episode 8 of "The Little Things" covers other aspects of mental health outreach in our community with features on equine therapy, agri-stress, the Texas Panhandle Chapter of National Alliance for Mental Health, and Amarillo College's amped up benefits for students and staff.

WATCH THE EPISODE AT PANHANDLEPBS.ORG/THELITTLETHINGS AND [YOUTUBE.COM/@PANHANDLEPBS](https://www.youtube.com/@PANHANDLEPBS).



LEARNING COMMUNITY

In 2022, PBHA and the SBDC launched a learning community to explore workplace mental health and culture.

Using Brené Brown's *Dare to Lead* book and curriculum as an outline, along with other resources compiled by the facilitators, the cohort spent 12 months exploring challenges, opportunities for growth, and ways to support the mental health of their employees and culture of their organizations, based on monthly discussion and exercises.

Cohort members developed and implemented a variety of projects in their organizations from a monthly cohort to help employees become advocates for mental health awareness in their organization, to a "Monday Minute" that encourages staff to gather and share something positive about the upcoming week.

LEARN MORE AND APPLY FOR FUTURE COHORTS AT
[PANHANDLEBEHAVIORALHEALTHALLIANCE.ORG/WORKPLACE-MH](https://panhandlebehavioralhealthalliance.org/workplace-mh)



Pictured from L to R:

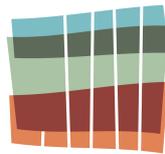
- Sunde Ross, *Panhandle Regional Planning Commission*
- Lesley Webb, *Opportunity School*
- Shree Veeramachaneni, *Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance*
- Robyn Cranmer, *Canyon ISD*
- Belinda Crelia-Palacios, *Amarillo Children's Home*
- Gina Woodward, *America's SBDC at WTAMU*
- Dr. Shauna Thornhill, *Amarillo Vision Specialists*
- Lara Escobar, *Amarillo Area Foundation* (not pictured)

SPONSORS

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If you or someone you know needs immediate mental health assistance, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week through these resources:

CALL: 9-8-8

TEXT: HOME to 741741

Toll-free crisis hotline: (800) 692-4039

